CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1226
5 October 1993

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 2 OCTOBER 1993 FROM THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A PRESS RELEASE AND A STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPLOYED ON THE TERRITORY OF THE UKRAINE

I am sending you for information a press release dated 21 September 1993 and a statement by a representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 1 October, relating to the issue of the elimination of nuclear weapons deployed on the territory of Ukraine.

I would be most grateful to you if these documents could be distributed to delegations of member States of the Conference and observer States.

(Signed): V. ZEMSKOV
Deputy Representative
of the Russian Federation
on the Conference on
Disarmament

GE.93-62653 (E)

PRESS RELEASE

The 9 September 1993 issue of the newspaper Kievskie Vedomosty carried a photocopy of the "Protocol on the withdrawal to the Russian Federation of all nuclear warheads from the strategic nuclear forces deployed in Ukraine".

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation is authorized to state the following in this respect.

During the meeting in Massandra on 3 September this year between the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine, it was agreed that all nuclear warheads from the strategic nuclear forces which are deployed in Ukraine will be withdrawn to Russia no later than 24 months after the date of ratification of the START-1 Treaty by Ukraine. The substance of this agreement, as can be seen from the photocopy, is reflected in the title of the document, which includes the word "all". The Presidents decided that the document would be of a confidential nature and would bear the signatures of their heads of government. Moreover, the Prime Ministers signed a prepared document which reads as follows:

> "The President of the Russian Federation and the President of Ukraine have agreed that after ratification of the START-1 Treaty by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine the Government of Ukraine will, no later than 24 months after the date of ratification, ensure the withdrawal of all nuclear warheads from the strategic nuclear forces deployed in Ukraine to the Russian Federation for dismantling and destruction."

However, A.D. Buteiko, an adviser to the Ukrainian President, taking advantage of the fact that the documents passed through his hands after being signed by the head of the Ukrainian Government, L.D. Kuchma, made two handwritten corrections to the text, changing the substance of the agreement entirely. These corrections are clearly visible in the copy published in Kiev: the word "all" is crossed out and the words "subject to the Treaty" are added after the words "strategic nuclear forces". These amendments in fact signify that Ukraine, or in this case a certain group in the government apparatus, is striving to retain some of the nuclear weapons in Ukrainian hands in defiance of Ukraine's international obligations.

In spite of a high-level protest from the Russian side, Ukrainian representatives refused to restore the original language. Given this behaviour by the Ukrainian side, which is to say the least unusual in diplomatic practice, the Russian side officially invalidated this Protocol and immediately notified the Ukrainian representatives accordingly.

Thus the "Protocol on the withdrawal to the Russian Federation of all nuclear warheads from the strategic nuclear forces deployed in Ukraine" is non-existent. This, of course, does not affect the substance of the agreements reached by Russia and Ukraine at the level of heads of State and government.

STATEMENT BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

As is well known, on 3 September 1993, during the meeting between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine in Massandra, historic agreements were achieved regarding the elimination of all nuclear weapons deployed on the territory of Ukraine. The agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine on the recycling of nuclear warheads, as well as the basic principles governing the recycling of nuclear warheads from the strategic nuclear forces stationed in Ukraine, associated with this agreement, were signed by the heads of government of both countries and published in the press. Moreover, the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine agreed that after ratification of the START-1 Treaty by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine, the Government of Ukraine will, no later than 24 months after the date of ratification, ensure the withdrawal of all nuclear warheads from the strategic nuclear forces deployed in Ukraine to the Russian Federation for dismantling and destruction.

Nobody has cancelled or repudiated these agreements. This was stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia on 21 September. Yet we believe that it is necessary to draw this to the attention of the international community once again, in view of the fact that a racket has recently been raised in some of the media, partly at the prompting of certain Ukrainian officials, with the transparent purpose of calling into question the agreements on nuclear weapons reached between the President of the Russian Federation and the President of Ukraine. All the evidence indicates that this is being done by those in Ukraine who are displeased with the actions and decisions of their own President and wish to cancel the results achieved in Massandra.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to state that all the agreements reached in Massandra regarding nuclear weapons remain fully in effect. The task now is to begin their practical implementation as soon as possible. Russia stands ready to do so.

1 October 1993